VZCZCXRO5327
RR RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHNEH RUEHPW RUEHSK
RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHEK #0663 1730536
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 220536Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2362
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3131
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1418
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3466
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2852
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS BISHKEK 000663

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR KG
SUBJECT: Kyrgyz Election Campaigning Officially Begins

Ref: Bishkek 656

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Three of the six registered candidates held
campaign events on June 18, the first day of the campaign season.
President Bakiyev opened his campaign with a speech in Talas to
about 5,000 government workers -- minus some potential
troublemakers, while the opposition UPM released their candidate's
platform in front of a tepidly enthusiastic crowd of 200 in Bishkek.
 Opposition candidate Temir Sariyev campaigned in Jalalabad, and
encountered some resistance from local Bakiyev supporters. END
SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Three of the six registered candidates held campaign events
on June 18, the first day of the campaign season. There will be no
additional candidates: On June 17, the Supreme Court upheld the
Central Election Commission's decision that Akbaraly Aitikeev had
not met the requirements to register as a presidential candidate.

Bakiyev Opens Campaign at National Site

¶3. (SBU) President Bakiyev opened his campaign in Talas Oblast
with a speech to about 5,000 people at the Manas Ordo complex, a
massive site that celebrates the epic of Kyrgyz hero Manas.
Opposition newspapers reported that most of the attendees were
school teachers and government workers bused in for a command
performance. A United People's Movement (UPM) spokesperson said
that five UPM members, and a number of other people, were arrested
as they attempted to enter the site wearing Atambayev shirts.
Whether the arrestees have been released or charged is not yet
clear.

Curbed Enthusiasm at UPM Sendoff

¶4. (SBU) Embassy observed a June 18 presentation of UPM candidate
Atambayev's platform. The event was held at the Social Democrat
Party Headquarters, and attracted an audience of about 200. UPM
leaders, including Ata Meken leader Omurbek Tekebayev, and Social
Democrat MPs Bakyt Beshimov and Roza Otunbayeva gave short speeches.
 Tekebayev garnered the most applause, ending with the slogan,

"Together we can do it!," but a subsequent attempt by MP Irina Karamushkina to get the crowd to chant the slogan fizzled. Atambayev himself was not present at the meeting. Organizers reported that he was campaigning in Jalalabad Oblast.

¶5. (SBU) Atambayev's platform criticizes Bakiyev for recreating the system of family rule that characterized previous President Akayev's administration, and promises a new system of government with strong controls on corruption and executive authority.

Some Pushback on Sariyev Campaign

¶6. (SBU) According to a contact in the Temir Sariyev campaign, Sariyev elected to open his campaign in the southern Jalalabad Oblast, an area generally considered to be broadly supportive of President Bakiyev. Sariyev then plans to move on to Batken Oblast. The contact reported that the campaign is not facing "substantial impediments," but they have not yet been allowed to rent billboards, and some of their campaign workers in Jalalabad have been threatened, leading to one resignation.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) With the campaign having officially started, we will now see how well-prepared the candidates are for the campaign and how extensively administrative resources are deployed for the benefit of incumbent President Bakiyev. Embassy will continue to monitor and report developments.

LITZENBERGER